

AUTHOR ENCOURAGES CHILDREN TO READ

This sporting life



Goal! Children's author Tom Palmer with pupils from High Hesket School. Tom visits schools all over the country to encourage reading for pleasure

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BY SUE CRAWFORD

TALES of adventure on and off the football pitch kept youngsters spell-bound when a top children's author took over their classroom.

Yorkshireman Tom Palmer met pupils from High Hesket School, near Carlisle, after it won the visit as a prize in a reading scheme.

Many of Tom's books are based on football or rugby with a detective theme thrown in for extra intrigue.

FUN

The children from High Hesket were encouraged to read his books and were then quizzed by Tom as part of his popular Football Reading Game. This sees pupils children winning penalty points for right answers which they then take outside for a penalty shoot-out.

"It is great fun and is a bril-



Book lovers: Children's author Tom Palmer talks to children from High Hesket School

liant way of combining reading with football or rugby," said 48-year-old Tom from Leeds. He is the author of three Puffin football series -

Football Academy, Foul Play and The Squad.

Tom is also involved in a writing project, with the National Literacy Trust, to tie

in with this month's Battle of the Somme centenary. It is set during the Euro 2016 football tournament. The main characters being school pupils on a

battlefield tour and First World War soldiers.

He became a professional author after trying for 20 years to get his first book published and, in his talk to the children, he used this as an example of why it is important never to give up.

"I aim to get this across in my books. There is always a bit of adventure and derring do. My message is that children enjoy reading books like this rather than the books adults think they should read," he added.

Margaret Taylor, head teacher at High Hesket, said the children enjoyed the session with Tom and loved combining reading with football.

She said: "We won Tom's visit through the Cumbria Library Service's Spell-Binding Reading Scheme. It was a real treat for everyone and a good way of encouraging our children to read."